



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Financial History of Baltimore. By J. H. HOLLANDER, PH.D., Associate in Economics in the Johns Hopkins University. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1899.—xiv, 397 pp.

Recently aroused interest in municipal government has brought forth, as one of its first results, a host of articles and books of a general nature, mostly crude and based on insufficient knowledge of facts. Fortunately more scientific investigation has now been begun by those who believe, with the author of the present monograph, "that until essential data have been digested and arranged in a series of detailed monographs . . . there can be no comprehensive study" of municipal administration or finance. In this book Dr. Hollander has himself done more than any other writer to set before us such data. While to some it might at first seem supererogation to devote nearly four hundred octavo pages to one phase of the administrative history of a single city, the doubt disappears when the need of accurate material from which to draw wider generalizations is properly understood. We must remember, moreover, that a city's finances, when discussed as Dr. Hollander has discussed them, touch practically every side of its government. The fullness, the systematic arrangement and the sustained interest of this work are the more praiseworthy, in view of the "crude and inaccessible primary sources" with which, like other students of city affairs, the writer has had to deal.

The author divides the history of Baltimore's finances into four periods. The first, 1729-96, is the only one marked off clearly by a general change in municipal organization, the town first receiving a city charter in the latter year. Strangely enough, this charter was retained, with only gradual and partial amendment, down to 1898. This is but one indication of the fact that in all matters Baltimore has been, as compared with many other American cities, relatively free from interference by the state legislature. The other three periods are somewhat roughly distinguished by changes in the general character and policy of municipal life.

Although many leading features of financial practice had their origin in the two earlier periods, we may perhaps question whether Dr. Hollander has not given to these more space and effort than their importance warrants. In the third period, 1817-56, the most striking characteristic of Baltimore's financiering was the large use of its credit in aid of internal improvements—railways and canals. Unfortunately this dangerous policy did not, as with many other cities, early come to an end. In spite of the almost invariable failure of

these enterprises to prove profitable, the municipality, urged on by the hope that thus its earlier investments might be rescued, continued to throw good money after bad as late as during the eighties ; while to this day the corporations aided have continued to default, in part or altogether, in paying the interest on the large sums advanced to them or guaranteed for them by the city. Nor is this the only respect in which the city, during the most modern period of its history, has shown open and complete disregard of ordinary principles of sound finance. From conspicuous financial scandals, indeed, she has been comparatively free ; for, although there has been much corruption and extravagance on a moderate scale, "the affairs of the city have simply been conducted upon a dull level of expensive mediocrity." But repeatedly during the seventies, and again in the past few years, attempts to give a false appearance of economy by a low tax rate have resulted in heaping up great floating debts, later necessitating issues of funding bonds. Additional appropriations made after the tax levies have swelled these deficits. Levies of taxes for sinking funds, though enjoined by law, have been, until very recently, simply dropped ; while the normal accretions of these funds have been diverted to interest payments, so that large blocks of matured bonds have had to be refunded. The assessment of taxes, too, has been unequal and inadequate, and general revaluations have been made only at long intervals. The one commendable feature of the financial management has been the securing of a large revenue from the street-railway companies.

Dr. Hollander hopes for great improvement, in general as well as in financial administration, from the new charter of 1898, which he describes in detail. Its most important provision as to finance is the introduction of a board of estimates. For the future the author sees need of larger expenditures in many lines, over against a hitherto rather inelastic revenue. He believes, however, that—chiefly through better administration of the general property tax, but also through new license taxes on businesses especially benefited by city growth, and through more careful management of city property and franchises—the needed expenditure, under due economy, can be adequately met.

A few minor errors in diction or typography are almost the only blemishes upon this excellent piece of work. Thus we find "collate" used where codify or collect is intended (p. 152) ; ground "binding" upon a street (p. 210) ; and a rather monotonously regular use of the phrase "from out" or "from out of" the treasury or various funds.